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LETTER DATED 31 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 31 January 1991 addressed to you by Mr. Habib Boularès, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Tunisian Republic, and should like to request you to have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ahmed GHEZAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 31 January 1991 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia addressed to the President of the Security Council

The military operations in the Gulf which began in the early hours of 17 January 1991 have taken a dangerous turn today as the parties to the conflict threaten to use chemical, bacteriological and nuclear weapons. Indeed, the statements issued on Monday, 28 January 1991, raise the fear that the transition to non-conventional warfare is imminent.

Tunisia, which has always condemned the use of weapons of mass destruction, believes that this turn of events, which may occur at any moment, is not unstoppable. We do not accept the idea that the United Nations can do nothing about this situation, which will lead directly to the fateful deployment of the ultimate weapon. The Security Council still has time to call for a suspension of hostilities so that this fate can be avoided and preference can once again be given to the path of reason and negotiation over the vagaries of war.

While reiterating the demand it has made together with the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union, Tunisia calls upon the Security Council to take this decision to prevent a disaster which will have irreparable consequences and which we all will one day call unjustified and, above all, preventable. The peoples of the world would find it incomprehensible that the Security Council, which has the power to stop the war from escalating, did not do so at the appropriate time.

A United Nations victory ought not be identified with victory achieved by weapons; even less should it be achieved at the cost of destruction on a scale hitherto unseen in this part of the world, which has in fact been scarred by seven wars in less than 50 years. A United Nations victory lies only in peace: there is still time to give it every chance.

(Signed) Habib BOULARES